

Senator LaValle and Assemblyman Thiele Pass Bill for Pilot Seaweed Cultivation Program

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(Long Island, NY) State Senator Ken LaValle and State Assemblyman Fred Thiele passed legislation, S.7772-A/A.10146-A, which would authorize Suffolk County to allow certain underwater lands in Gardiner's and Peconic Bays to be used for the implementation of a pilot program to conduct research and scientific assessment of the feasibility of cultivating seaweed.

Chapter 425 of the Laws of New York 2004, amended the Environmental Conservation Law by adding Section 13-0302 under which the State of New York ceded 110,000 acres of underwater land in Peconic Bay and Gardiners Bay to Suffolk County for the purpose of shellfish cultivation, and authorized Suffolk County to develop a leasing program that would provide current and new shellfish growers access to these waters in an environmentally sustainable way. The Suffolk County Shellfish Aquaculture Lease Program (SCALP) in Peconic Bay and Gardiners Bay was adopted by Suffolk County in 2009, and successful implementation is underway.

There is evidence in neighboring states, including Connecticut and Maine that seaweed and macroalgae cultivation can yield an economically viable market product which also has the dual benefit of being a nutrient sink, removing excess nitrogen from estuarine waters.

This legislation must now be delivered to the Governor for consideration.